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## THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

JANUARY 16 1981

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### Fifty years on . . .

The TLS of January 15, 1931 reviewed Vladimir Brumovsky's *The Ognys*.

As a non-Communist in the Communist state M. Brumovsky was exposed to the special risks which report events have once again made plain. His account of his arrest and trial might, indeed, but for the fact that both were under the secret process of the Ognys, have been taken from the proceedings in the so-called Moscow trial of specialists accused of plotting intervention. Like them he was charged with having given false information to the representatives of foreign Powers. As in their case, none but obviously fabricated evidence was brought in support of the charge. And, as in their case, a ludicrous

error was made in the fabrication. Evidence, however, mattered little. M. Brumovsky had courted arrest by becoming a Latvian citizen, and death by refusing to give up his citizenship in exchange for a post in the doubtful economic section of the Ognys. That the death sentence passed on him was never carried out was due to his skill in smuggling details of his case outside prison. This came to the knowledge of British representatives, who were not unnaturally surprised to learn of his alleged espionage on their behalf. Exchange was a long process and before it was finally effected M. Brumovsky had spent over a year in the prisons of the Ognys. But this time to good use, and has given here a record of his observations which constitutes the

first complete account of these prisons we have had in English. The physical suffering . . . great though it was, was not to be compared with the psychological. Prisoners like M. Brumovsky lived for years in their cells, shut off from an outside world with which they were forbidden to communicate, compelled to be ever on guard against agents-provocateurs among both prisoners and wardens, with nothing but execution and Solovetsky to look forward to. A few committed suicide—only a few. M. Brumovsky believes, because the experience of life in Soviet Russia had taught them to bear suffering. Others went mad. . . . Still more yielded to the temptations put in their way and took service under the Ognys.

### BIOGRAPHY

JAMES K. LYON:

Bertolt Brecht in America  
408pp. Princeton University Press, £11.  
0 691 06443 1

Chased from my country now I have to see  
If there's some shop or bar that I can find  
Where I can sell the products of my mind  
Again I tread the roads well known to me  
Worn smooth by those accustomed to defeat  
I'm on my way but don't yet know to whom  
Wherever I go they ask me: "Spell your name!"  
And oh, that name was once accounted great . . .

The poems Brecht wrote in America between 1941 and 1947 tell us much about his mental and emotional life during those years. Now James K. Lyon tells us all, or what seems like all, or even more than all in some departments, drawing on unpublished letters and documents, FBI files, and interviews with the subject's friends, relatives, associates and collaborators.

Brecht's American years were, in his own words, an "exile in paradise"—he thought of himself throughout as an exile, not an immigrant—and to this we might add, with partial truth, that Brecht was himself the serpent in the garden. The experience of exile is, of course, especially hard on one whose life centres on language, and no easier if he finds he has little fame in his new land. (There was a sharp contrast there between Brecht's lot and that of the much-translated Thomas Mann.) The situation is aggravated if the exile is a playwright, and thus in need of a theatre; still further aggravated when he has very definite and unshared ideas about "theatre". Brecht's students, temporarily, at least, for much of his writing at this time he saw as lessons laid up in advance for the post-war German people. As for America, his view resembled Rilke's: it was a country of nomads who built homes without intending to stay in them and changed jobs like boots, restless, lacking a cultural past. Nine days after arriving he wrote in his journal of "this mortuary of a week later, of Hollywood, alas, its hero was too unheroic, its humour too European, and the play didn't receive its first professional American performance until 1977."

During 1943-44 Brecht wrote *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* in which the celebrated Austrian-born actress Luise Rainer was to star on Broadway. Their ideas on acting failed to coincide and—although at this point only one page of the play existed—a violent row blew up. Luise Rainer remembers it thus: "Brecht (calmly): 'Do you know who I am?' Rainer (calmly): 'Yes. You are Bertolt Brecht.' And do you know who I am?' Brecht: 'Yes. You are nothing.' Nothing. . . . Nothing. . . . The usual tangle ensued, with collaborators and translators set each against the other and only Brecht's right hand knowing what his left was doing. Luise Rainer withdrew from the role, Auden from the translation, and two decades passed before the play was seen in New York. Two minor successes—minor in Brecht's table of priorities, one guesses—were the publication by New Directions in 1944 of seventeen scenes from the play *The Private Life of the Master Race*, as translated by Eric Bentley, and of *Selected Poems*, in the fine English versions of H. R. Hays, by Reynal and Hitchcock in 1947.

For Luise Rainer, Brecht was "cruel, selfish, vain—an awful man". Apropos of the confusion into which Brecht had thrown the staging of *Master Race* in 1945, Eric Bentley wrote to a mutual acquaintance with considerable discretion: "He has neither good manners nor elementary decency. He lives out his own theory that it is impossible to behave well in this society . . . a scoundrel but an

collaborative effort, but with himself as the boss, having the whip-hand. Hollywood declined to hand the whip over."

Most engaging, perhaps, was the plan to turn his poem "Children's Crusade" into a film, by having the ballad-story told in a snowbound New England schoolroom. The project failed, seemingly in that it was "by extension" an anti-war film and it had to compete with the successful and more wholehearted war pictures then being put out by Hollywood. Another story on which Brecht worked, "Silent Witness", would seem to have the requisite ingredients, including a strong plot and a happy ending, to carry it to the silver screen. A French woman, unjustly accused of collaboration with the Germans, is nearly vindicated when recognized as the model for a stained-glass window of Joan of Arc commissioned by a dead but impeccable abbé who worked for the Resistance. . . . However, Brecht insisted that the leading lady should appear with her head shaved—and no star would ever be persuaded to do that! Then there was his comedy, *Schwyzk in the Second World War*, probably written with an eye and a half on Broadway—alas, his hero was too unheroic, its humour too European, and the play didn't receive its first professional American performance until 1977.

I saw many friends  
And the friend I loved most  
Among them helplessly sunk  
Into the swamp . . .  
and ends thus:

Now I watched him leaning back  
Covered with leeches in the ship  
Moving, softly moving along  
Upon the sinking sea  
That glacially blissful smile.  
The poem was apparently about Peter Lorre, addicted to morphine and now suffering a sharp decline in reputation, and since it was found among his papers we may assume the author gave it to him. Lyon claims, less than convincingly, that "the poem is for Lorre as a human being whom he wanted to help." It savours of the coolly didactic.

Yet it is probable that Brecht was truly attached to Lorre, as also to the politically timorous Charles Laughton, whom Lyon considers for him in his American exile. If Brecht hid his feelings, he must have had them. He customarily preferred to voice a professional reason for admiring someone rather than a merely personal one: to admit to an objective cause for affection was, at least sometimes, the case with his women friends too; they were of interest in more ways than one. There is a comical-naughty poem written in America in which he praises an ample peasant-style skirt—Yvonne's, he says—bringing to mind Colchis/The Medea strolled towards the sea—adding that there are other grounds for favouring such a skirt, how

## Exile in Paradise

By D. J. Enright



Brecht and his son Stefan, a student at Harvard, on a rooftop in New York, 1946.

ever: base and lustful ones, which will do for me."

In his chapter on "Brecht's Women" Lyon is relatively reticent, confining himself to (a) Ruth Berlau and (b) Brecht's wife Helene Weigel (both of them actresses (though then unemployable) and thus collaborators, as being the only two women in America who mattered in terms of his work. Certainly there would be little point very properly in running through the members of the "harem" Suffice it to say that Brecht's briskeness (and his distaste for the bourgeois/capitalist notion of love/ownership) is Joseph Losey's comment that he "ate very little, drank very little, and fornicated a great deal." A story about Helene Weigel recounted here is particularly refreshing in that it was commonly Brecht who came out on top in arguments with his intimates. She had maintained that women possessed greater fortitude than men since they had to put up with menstruation and child-birth. Brecht, who was notorious for his permanent stubble, countered: "Men shave." To which his wife retorted: "How do you know?"

That Brecht, who could put his hand to practically anything, was forced to sound the alarm of heart, is a case for Brecht's warmth of heart. He quotes a poem of Brecht's written in 1947, which begins with a reference to the "swamp" of Hollywood, or conceivably of drugs:

I saw many friends  
And the friend I loved most  
Among them helplessly sunk  
Into the swamp . . .  
and ends thus:

Now I watched him leaning back  
Covered with leeches in the ship  
Moving, softly moving along  
Upon the sinking sea  
That glacially blissful smile.  
The poem was apparently about Peter Lorre, addicted to morphine and now suffering a sharp decline in reputation, and since it was found among his papers we may assume the author gave it to him. Lyon claims, less than convincingly, that "the poem is for Lorre as a human being whom he wanted to help." It savours of the coolly didactic.

hind his gibe that Brecht spent two hours every day pushing dirt under his fingernails to make himself look like a worker.

The quarrel between Brecht and Thomas Mann—the greatest German novelist and the best living German poet, both exiles—is less edifying. According to Katia Mann's *Unwritten Memories*, a source not cited by Lyon, hostility was born early on, when somebody showed Mann one of Brecht's plays and the novelist's comment—"Just imagine, the monster has talent!"—was relayed to the dramatist. The latter came back with a rather sharper quip: "As a matter of fact, I always found his short stories quite good." Ill feeling intensified in America; Mann referred to Brecht as a "party-liner"; Brecht described Mann's works as "clerico-fascist." Mann was a pessimist, seeing the Faustian two souls as Siamese twins native to the German breast; Brecht was an optimist, readying himself to foster a one-souled Germany just as soon as he could get back there. Mann was an "establishment" figure, or figurehead, in America; Brecht, as ever, was a rebel, a "professional anti-". In Elsa Lanchester's phrase. Yet neither was exactly singular—both, indeed, were masters of irony—and possibly what each most disliked in the other was his public image. The one dirtied his fingernails every day, the other cleaned them.

We may still be in doubt as to Brecht's remark about Stalin's innocent victims and what he intended by it. For while he himself was devoted to the play of thesis and antithesis, what he generally expected from other people was synthesis, or plain simplicity. When Hans Viereck, a Trotskyist, asked who declined to accept his views, he answered: "They have to be shot." Given his dialectical nature not very many would be left alive in that case. As Lyon says, it was Viereck who came as near as anybody to grasping the complexities of the Brecht enigmas when he described him as a one-man political party. The description "financed" . . . in close coalition with the Communists, which now gives it an air of paradox. But then, paradox was in order for Brecht, while orthodox was for other people. And what in him was the licence of the "chameleon poet" would in others be the mark of the turncoat.

Katia Mann's comment on Brecht's appearance before the House Un-American Activities Committee is very sly indeed: "He was very sly indeed: he pretended to be stupid and the others were stupid." Brecht politely stressed his consciousness of being a guest in the United States, freely admitted that he was not nor ever had been a member of any Communist party, and courteously corrected the Committee regarding the year of his birth. Martin Esslin has compared the proceedings to the cross-examining of a zoologist by apes. Then the apes, too, were courteous at least. "They weren't as bad as the Nazis," Brecht joked, "the Nazis would never have let me smoke." Finally the Committee pronounced him an honest and cooperative fellow, and a good example to others, whose links with known Communists were principally or an artistic level, a judgment which normally would have infuriated him but, presumably, on this occasion, merely amused. As it happened the hearing was held immediately before Brecht's previously arranged departure from the country: a coincidence, which, as Lyon notes, gave his departure a dramatic appearance. It was as if he were escaping from a witch-hunt. (A hunt from which he had just been officially exempted.) He was pursued hotly by an award of \$3,000 from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. And behind him, like a bomb, timed to go off later, he left his dramaturgy. "In one form or another, it was theatre until the very end."

The opening quotation is from "Sonnet in Emigration" (also indexed as "Sonnet in Exile"), translated by Edith Rosseter. Brecht: Poems 1913-1956, edited by John Willett and Ralph Manheim. Lyon: Methuen, 1976.



# Crossing the insuperable line

By Brigid Brophy

HENRY S. SALT:  
Animals' Rights: Considered in  
Relation to Social Progress  
231pp. Centaur Press. £7.50.  
0 5000098 8

"Put animals into politics". The slogan is a tactical move. On a strategic view of politics, animals of the other species are there already—and have been ever since the "political animal" first organized himself, and colonized the environment. They exercise the most grossly and bitterly exploited class in history, the permanent lower-than-slave class whom humans wantonly imprison, eat, torture, wear and use for target-practice. It is in terms essentially of political morality that Henry Salt, self-described "rationalist, socialist, pacifist and humanitarian", makes his case. Reissued, with trimmings, by the Centaur Press, which thereby keeps up its honourable record on this subject and lives up to its species-reconciling name, Salt's book was first published in 1892. It appeals not to mercy (the other animals are not, Salt points out, criminals) but to justice, and the argument at its heart is an expansion of Jeremy Bentham's prophetic claim, that, having begun by attending to the condition of the slaves, human beings will eventually extend the protection of the law to "any sensitive being".

What, Bentham cruelly asked in 1789, traces the supposedly "insuperable line" between sentient human individuals and sentient individuals of all the other kinds?

## In a competitive cosmos

By Peter Clarke

GRETA JONES:  
Social Darwinism and English Thought  
The Interaction Between Biological and Social Theory.  
234pp. Brighton: Harvester Humanities Press. £22.50.  
0 85527 811 0

When Darwin wrote *The Origin of Species* he carefully avoided direct mention of one species: his own. Prudent as this play may have seemed, it was unavailing if Darwin had hoped thereby to divert controversy. The crux of the Darwinian debate was, and is, the place of man within the larger pattern of evolution. Darwin's subtlest reference to the preservation of favoured races by means of natural selection, the uniquely featured position of man, presumably derived from selective processes of unusual rigour. Now according to the older wisdom of Aristotle, man was a political animal—at any rate an animal inseparably attached to social existence, from the outset, therefore, the mechanisms of natural selection were examined with an eye to their implications for social evolution.

As is well known, Darwin had devoted his insight about the paramountcy of the struggle for subsistence from reading of Malthus's English, trenchantly caricatured Darwinism as a "transfer from society to living nature of Hobbes's doctrine of 'bellum omnium contra omnes' and of the bourgeois-economic doctrine of competition together with Malthus's theory of population". Words still, no longer had biology been recast in the mould of classical antiquity than the sanction of evolutionary science was in turn demanded for the operation of market forces, the natural selection and competition had been performed, Engels observed, "the same theories are transferred back again from biology to history and it is now claimed that their validity as eternal laws of human society has been proved". This may look like the opportunity of the moment, snatching at bright ideas across the disciplinary boundaries. But its real significance may well lie in the significance of evolutionary theory as a paradigm of the different

vision in the direction of realism.

Even the legal mind of Perry Mason deceived itself when, after informing Della Street that "Karakul coats are made from one-day-old, new-born lambs", he answered her protesting "Seems a mean trick to play on the lambs" by replying "Oh, it isn't a mean trick for the fur industry, the strain wouldn't be cultivated, so the lamb wouldn't be born at all". A lamb that is never conceived because its breed is not cultivated suffers no pain or injury there. It does not exist for inflicting the rights of an individual by claiming to promote his species, any more than I am justified in murdering you in order to leave more room in the house for your children. It is only humans who stand to gain (money, fur coats and aesthetic pleasure) from the continuation of the Karakul or indeed any animal species *qua* species, and only humans are hypocrites enough to pretend that by profiting from killing lambs they are benefactors of lambs.

Conversely, if, centring the discussion on yourself instead of your victim, you eat a pork chop on the grounds that a pig's life is of no value to you, you are confessing that you would as happily kill and eat your next-door neighbour if you took no pleasure in his existence and if you could get away with it. The proper question is what value that individual pig's irreplaceable life holds for that individual pig. The answer was given by Thomas Tryon in 1882: "the lives of all beasts are as sweet to them and they as much desire to continue them as men do and as unwillingly part with them".

Tryon is not mentioned in Salt's bibliography, which, however, disclaims completeness and is in-

formational and discursive on what it does cover. It disposes of the next (after Perry Mason's) most popular fallacy, namely that human cruelty to animals is justified by the cruelty of some animals to other animals (or, as it is often put nowadays, that it is all right for humans to eat sheep because black birds eat worms), by quoting Humphrey Primat in 1976: "dogs will worry and cocks will fight (though not so often, if we did not set them on) . . . Yet what is that to us? Are we dogs? Are we fighting cocks? Are they to be our tutors and instructors, that we appeal to them for arguments to justify and palliate our inhumanity?"

Salt's bibliography is brought up to date by a supplement that seems to date through sour grapes—I'm in a little top-heavy with articles in the philosophical journals. It is compiled by Charles Megol, a professor of philosophy in Minnesota and part of the now extensive North American branch of the movement to Put Animals into Philosophy, which in Britain is led by Roslind Godlovitch (one of the movement's initiators, in 1971), Stephen Clark and Timothy Sprigge.

Salt's text, however, addresses general readers, in clear, good-humoured prose. Sadly, its chapters on slaughter, "sport" and experimentation need little bringing up to date—except in the scale of the "murderous millinery" it is easy, as Peter Singer's preface says, to read the present-day fur trade, a murder case in which even Perry Mason cannot secure an acquittal.

Salt, who lived from 1851 to 1939, was one of the progressives of the 1890s whose thinking often seems nowadays radical to the point of daring. He abandoned school-

biological mechanism of heredity. This was, of course, the position taken famously by Lamarck at the beginning of the nineteenth century and rigorously avoided by Darwin in *The Origin* as first published in 1859. It was, however, a proposition with obvious temptations in its bearing on the evolutionary clock, and it allowed no place for Lamarckianism to be speeded up to match the time scale of historical societies. As Dr Jones points out, by the time Darwin published *The Descent of Man* in 1871 he had incorporated Lamarckian ideas into his theory of man, and in the process had been Lamarckian all along, and the public demand for evolutionary reassurance was better satisfied by Lamarckianism than by classical natural selection. For Lamarckianism allowed a role for intelligence and effort; it depended on purposeful striving to place new members of the environment. Under those conditions the survivors really did merit congratulation on their fitness. Thus, a biological process could directly be apprehended in Victorian society, with the challenge of the environment to place new members as the hazards and rewards of laissez-faire capitalism.

This doctrine, owing something to Lamarck and much to Spencer, is what we generally identify as Social

## Information please

Charles Ashleigh, Hobo, Wobblay, revolutionary, author of *Robbing Kid* (Faber, 1930): any information for a study of culture and American radicalism.

Eric Homberger, School of English and American Studies, University of East Anglia, Norwich NR4 7TJ.

Burr's *Commercial Glance*, annual broadsheet of the cotton trade published in Manchester, 1832 to c.1856: location of any copies, aside from that of January 17, 1845.

John Lyons, Department of Economics, University of Essex, Colchester CO4 3SQ.

William Morris: for an annotated bibliography of scholarly and criticism concerning the Victorian socialist, designer, and poet; any references to chapters or portions of books, or of articles, that deal with any aspect of his work or influence.

Gary L. Aho, Department of English, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts 01003.

Hugh James Rose (1840-1878): Chaplain to British mining companies in Spain; documents of any kind relating to his period of residence in Spain.

Adrian Shubert, Plaza de Caporcor, 12, 3. Dcha, Madrid 5.

Wolfe Tone: source of the following, by the Duke of Wellington: "Wolfe Tone was a most extraordinary man and his history is the most curious history of these times. With a hundred gullies

in his pocket, unknown and unappreciated, he went to Paris in order to overthrow the British Government in Ireland. He asked for a large force, Lord Edward Fitzgerald for a small one. They listened to Tone." Required for a biography of Tone.

H. Boylan, 4 Knapton Court, York Road, Dun Laoghaire, Ireland.

William Wilberforce (1759-1833): information as to the identity of "J.V.", whose letter appeared in the February 17, 1865 edition of the *London weekly Christian World*; the letter was about a stone seat placed in St. Dunstons Park by the Earl of Stanhope to commemorate the spot where Wilberforce was taken to bring before Parliament the subject of the abolition of the slave trade.

Peter Johnstone, 14 Chilton Drive, South Mead, Redhill, Surrey RH1 5BW.

# Learning from the Great Architect

By Frances Yates

JOSEPH RYKWERF:  
The First Moderns  
Architects of the Eighteenth Century  
585pp. MIT Press. £27.50.  
0 262 18090 1

This book is described on the jacket as a new kind of history of architecture which goes "well beyond the tradition of architectural history, which has largely been concerned with outward, stylistic evolution . . . it examines buildings as embodiments of a whole culture, founded on basic philosophical concepts". It is not a startlingly new idea to include architecture in the history of culture (particularly medieval culture which this book does not touch) but Rykwerf aims at more than that. He attempts actually to base the history of culture on the history of architecture understood in a very wide sense.

The classical view of the history of architecture certainly implies a universal role. From Egypt, the art of building was said to have passed through Greece, to Rome. Judaism was included, for Solomon's Temple was based on the classical orders. The world was a temple, reflecting the universal harmony of architecture. The proportions of man's body, Vitruvius taught that it was necessary for an architect to know all the arts and sciences; all were Vitruvian subjects relating to number, harmony and proportion.

It is the thesis of Rykwerf's book that the architecture of the centuries in which such assumptions were taken absolutely for granted was classical; when such assumptions began to break down, as in the eighteenth century, the term "neoclassical" must be used; the eighteenth-century architects were "the first moderns". This classification underlies the structure of his book.

## A palace and its place

By Nigel Glendinning

JONATHAN BROWN and J. H. ELLIOTT:  
A Palace for a King  
The Buen Retiro and the Court of Philip IV  
296pp. Yale University Press. £15.  
0 300 02507 6

Madrid has not been very good at preserving her palaces, and needs books like this from time to time to remind her what she has lost in the past. The city's royal palaces, the *palacios reales*, the *palacios reales*, were gutted by fire in 1734, and the Torre de la Parada, with its notable collection of mythological paintings, 1710. The *palacio de Buen Retiro*, the pride of Olivares and Philip IV, in the 1630s and 1640s, was the work of Jonathan Brown and J. H. Elliott's book went into a decline in the middle of the eighteenth century, and only two small sections and the gardens survive today.

The time that tourists like Theophile Gautier came to look down their noses at it in the nineteenth century, it seemed no more than "the realization of the dreams of some well-to-do tailorhand".

This book reconstructs the original dreams behind the Retiro. It also details the various stages of the palace's erection, partly through the eyes of contemporary witnesses and visual records, partly through architectural documents. The central concern of the book, however, is with the political position of the palace as a reflection of the cultural aspirations of the Spanish monarchy. In this respect, it ranges much more widely than the other major studies of Spanish palaces; Luis Cervantes' *Palacio de la Moneda* in Lerma (1967), and Svatava Alpers's *The Decoration of the Torre de la Parada* (1971).

Brown and Elliott constantly follow the various strands of

The introduction builds up the "classical" philosophy of architecture through analysis of Vitruvius on the orders compared with the Temple of Solomon, using Villalpanda's massive reconstruction of the Temple. This will certainly seem a strange way to begin a history of architecture, but there is much evidence that such a correlation was fundamental for "classical" theory. Behind the classical facade loomed the Temple, and behind that again the pyramids of Egypt. This historical vision explains the illusions in Renaissance architectural views, such as Serlio's "Tragic Scene", in which antique colonnades merge into obelisks and other oriental features.

The first chapters discuss French classicism with analysis of Perrault on Vitruvius. There is not enough in these chapters on French Renaissance classicism, as Philippe de l'Orme, on Bail's Academy of Music, to bring out the subtle changes in emphasis introduced in the classicism of the *grand siècle*. The new absolutism, the regimentation of culture in the Colbertian academies, reflect a hardening of the classical idea as compared with the Renaissance, and it is possible that Rykwerf puts his finger on significant points in the change when he says that Perrault's architecture was the first "demystified" classical order. This may be the root of Bernini's unhappiness in Paris.

Chapter six, an immensely long chapter with voluminous notes, arrives at Vitruvius in the English Renaissance with emphasis on John Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*. This date coincides with that of the founding of Bail's Academy of Poetry and Music in the French Renaissance. It is a remarkable coincidence, and one which illustrates the incorporation of unusual material into the history of architecture. So far as I know, this is the first general history of architecture which assigns a place of importance to John Dee, an indication of things have moved since I published *The World of 1600* in 1969. Before that date

it was assumed that there was no evidence of any influence of Renaissance architectural theory in England until the advent of Inigo Jones in the early seventeenth century.

In the now famous Preface, Dee shows familiarity with the text of Vitruvius and Alberti; he sets out the role of the architect as *universale*, knowledgeable in all the "Vitruvian subjects", from music to mathematics, both in the Preface and in his leadership of the Elizabethan development of the Temple is a major theme, or allegory, underlying ritual. In fact, the classical history of architecture descending from Egypt to Rome and linked with Judaism, is closely related to occultist views of history. The link of Freemasonry with architecture, though it has been avoided in straight architectural history, is really quite self-evident, as Rykwerf emphasizes.

It is, in fact, a leading theme of his book to include Masonic history with the history of modern Europe. To give one example, he points out that the explosion of architectural publications in the second and third decades of the eighteenth century coincided with the inception of Grand Lodge Masonry. And that the public interest in the history of laws governing the architecture of the universe, was propagated by noted Masons, James Anderson, author of the *Constitution*, and John Desaguliers, the Huguenot refugee, prominent in British Masonry. It is significant that Newton, the architect of the new scientific philosophy, emerged within the century in which the classical (or occult) history of architecture was still dominant.

Rykwerf makes the interesting suggestion that the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford, designed by Christopher Wren in 1663, "recalled Elizabethan theatres and only through them ancient precedent". This is but one instance of the links developed in the book between the Dee school and the subsequent development of architecture in England. Without Dee and Jones, thinks Rykwerf, Christopher Wren would have been inconceivable.

The thread in the classical architecture tradition which links

Vitruvius, the Roman, with Solomon, the builder of the Temple, is suggested in various ways. Rykwerf stresses the influence of King Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem on Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*, and presents Bacon, too, as in some sort descending from the Dee tradition. The Vitruvian-Solomonic synthesis draws the history of architecture, as understood by Rykwerf, somewhat into the sphere of the occult and relates it to the history of Freemasonry in which the building of the Temple is a major theme, or allegory, underlying ritual. In fact, the classical history of architecture descending from Egypt to Rome and linked with Judaism, is closely related to occultist views of history. The link of Freemasonry with architecture, though it has been avoided in straight architectural history, is really quite self-evident, as Rykwerf emphasizes.

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The thread in the classical architecture tradition which links

wealth of architectural illustration. Cities, buildings, gardens pass by in breathless profusion until, at the end, the torrent suddenly stops. Rykwerf is not given to generalization: he tries too many things at once; he tries to pursue them all, leaving movements to appear through detail.

In reading this book one has a sense of new possibilities opening up, of a new foundation from which to begin a unified approach to the cultural history of modern Europe. It is perhaps a foretaste of what might be done if the influences of the Temple were followed up more fully (research of this kind is already being undertaken by younger scholars) and in combination with Vitruvian influences, to form a foundation to which many of the most characteristic developments of modern Europe might be related—science, mathematics, music—in a new kind of humanism, more congenial to modern man, more integrated with his other interests, than the literary humanism of the Renaissance.

The range of Rykwerf's learning is enormous. History of gardens, Chinese influences, festival architecture, all contribute to the overflow of wealth. Great figures in the history of thought and science—Bacon, Newton, Vitruvius—are seen from new angles. Where architecture includes the architecture of the universe, Vitruvius and Solomon, everything is possible. Rykwerf is attempting in one book a project which demands many volumes: the impression of confusion, more room was needed for the deployment of the crowding themes. The overflow is crushed into the inordinately long footnotes which should have been included in an expanded text. All this makes for a difficult reading, but the reward for perseverance on through the neoclassical eighteenth century (mainly Italian and French) with the usual masses of fully footnoted information and

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# The mountaineer as metaphysician

By John Weightman

MICHAEL ROBERTS:  
Selected Poems and Prose  
Edited by Frederick Grubb  
205pp. Carcanet. £7.95.  
0 85635 263 2

Although Michael Roberts has now been dead for more than thirty years, I suppose his memory is still secure in the rather narrow world of modern poetry where individuals, even of different generations, tend to be exceptionally aware of each other as members of a beleaguered freemasonry. He was not only a minor poet with a personal voice; he was also a central figure, as editor and critic, in the poetic world of the 1930s. In addition to being a friend and associate of T. S. Eliot, had he not died of leukemia at the relatively early age of forty-six, he would, in all likelihood, have been an important presence on the post-war literary scene.

But it is not in the first place, as a poet that I remember him. By chance, I spent a term at the Royal Grammar School in Newcastle in 1937 or 38, when he was a master there. (Something must be wrong with the "Chronology" at the beginning of this volume since it says that Roberts left the RGS in 1931—a misprint for 1941?). I do not think I ever knew what he was supposed to teach officially—Dr Grubb tells us it was physics and mathematics—but I have a vivid recollection of his weekly talks to the Sixth Form. He was a big, craggy man, with an aggressive, no-nonsense manner and a rough voice, tempered to some extent by the amused glint from behind his spectacles. He would settle himself unobtrusively at the master's desk and begin speaking at once, as if there had been an interval since the previous session. He didn't talk at the boys, although he occasionally speculated about

their possible attitudes to what he was saying. He just sat there and thought aloud about whatever theme happened to be occupying his mind at the moment, on one occasion it might be the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine, and on another the traditions of the music-hall, since he had just seen a variety show at the Theatre Royal.

I was enthralled, because it wasn't the usual, neatly-mouthed, schoolmasterly chat, but a strenuous wrestling with ideas as he tried—with the occasional relief of an expletive—to organize them in front of us. Many of the remarks he made and the metaphors he invented on the spur of the moment have remained with me over the years, not only because they were individually telling but also because they seemed to be part of an evolving system. The fact that this system depended ultimately on Christian belief, which I already knew was not for me, only made the experience more absorbing. How could so robust a mind accept the fuzzy margin of faith? I didn't solve the problem then, nor during our occasional meetings later in London, and it did not seem to be fully elucidated either in his writings.

His written style, both in prose and poetry, is stiffer, less varied and exciting, than the impact of his speaking presence. He was a good writer, but not one of those people who become more vital in the printed page than they are in real life. In this he was the opposite of T. S. Eliot, who often appeared tongue-tied and slow-moving, as if the slightest utterance were an anguish to him. Anyone seeing two of them together, without knowing who they were, might have thought that Roberts was by far the more brilliant manipulator of language. Only one text quoted in this volume gives something of the quality of his conversation; it is a talk on punctuation, which begins as a light-hearted piece but eventually, and characteristically, defines Roberts's favourite sport in

the light of the attitude of the human mind towards the problem of evil, and does so firmly, but with no trace of pomposity.

Although he made his public reputation as a poet and a critic of poetry, he remained very much a scientist, convinced of the validity of the scientific view-point on its own level, and of the need to incorporate it into any modern system of thought. It is interesting to see that, in an early review, he chides even Eliot, with whom he was otherwise so much in sympathy, for being too dismissive about science, and in particular for failing to see that it had changed the nature of certain social problems by turning the question of production into a question of distribution. Even in the slightest of the review articles assembled here, there are hard little nuggets of thought concerned with the relationship between science



Michael Roberts at Hermitage Castle, 1938.

and humanist culture. For instance, he talks in one of his essays, "The Scientific Outlook," about the "power-thought" or the ability to change the world, whereas, according to Roberts, the power is a by-product of a deeper quest for truth.

The scientist's search for generality through successive abstraction resembles Eliot's search for reality. . . . Metaphysics and ethics are not identical with religion, and there is no reason why a scientific metaphysics should not be accompanied by some form of mysticism. With Mr. Russell's quiescentism, a person who condemns the universe as Mr. Russell does . . . is necessarily religious, for the scientific metaphysics merely permits one to say that any universe in which there is scope for moral effort must appear to contain evil as well as good. The observer, being himself part of it, cannot condemn the entire scheme of things unless he has recourse to some religious standards of judgment over and above his ordinary moral standards.

I am not sure that I entirely agree with this, but it prompts thought by justifiably complicating a problem that Russell had perhaps expressed in too simple a form. In another review, Roberts complains about "the slovenly Unchristianity" of the Thirties, which is as bad as "the slovenly Christianity of a century ago," and he adds the challenging remark: "I am not sure that I entirely agree with this, but it prompts thought by justifiably complicating a problem that Russell had perhaps expressed in too simple a form."

Most Englishmen—including communists and those who profess and call themselves atheists—would, if they tidied their own minds, find themselves driven back to a Christian theology; a few, like Mr. Murray and perhaps Mr. Eliot, would discover themselves to be heretics, unwilling or willing, as the case may be, to submit to Holy Church.

In the process of trying to tidy my own mind, particularly in relation

to modern French literature, I have come to see how true this is; very often professional non-believers depend on the ghost of Christian theology, while self-confessed Catholics may be far removed from the temporary norm of the Church, but are too near to moving to Roberts' side of the divide, but I wish he had lived to elaborate these ideas more authoritatively in some definitive work. His last, uncompleted book, *The Estate of Man*, contains some good things, but like its predecessors, *The Modern Mind* and *The Revival of the West*, it hardly corresponds to the full force of his intellect.

His poetry does not elaborate thought, rather it expresses, in terms of natural images, a total acceptance of the blind play of forces in the universe, an acceptance which must underlie all thought, especially when the poet is a scientist and a mountaineer. Thus his belief did not exclude a tragic sense of necessity, as in:

Come winter, come grey number  
Of times and places, come  
Of music and sunlight; be the end  
Of fancy, and all childhood grace.

Come, you were always there, my chaos.  
or again, more ironically and even God-teasingly, in a late valdely poem:

"Already" said my host, "You have arrived already."  
But by what route, what ingenuities  
It was inconsiderate of you to suddenly  
Placing me in this ridiculous quandary.

I had predicted a great future for you,  
A future without happiness or hope;  
I had prepared a suitable meal  
For your reception.  
And now you arrive with a bundle  
Of daffodils, a foxglove,  
And a still unfinished smile.  
Really!

Nothing seems deadlier, at the moment, than the politics of the 1980s. The hopes, fears and problems of that decade were actually much the same as ours (it was then that the word "recession" was popularized); but at the moment it is easier to be conscious of the fact that times have changed, and we with them. So all the more praise is due to Charles Fontenay for the admirable work of resurrection that he has performed for Estes Kefauver, a leading figure of the period, whose claims on the attention of posterity are real, though singularly elusive. The foundation of his political achievements, such as they were, was his amazingly strong hold on the respect and affection of large numbers of American voters. His popularity was durable and formidable enough to alarm his competitors and keep them at work for years to circumvent his ambitions; and of course it encouraged in those ambitions, and suggested the means by which they might be realized.

They were not merely presidential. During the crime hearings of 1950-51, which made him famous, Kefauver discovered the art of rousing the public, and tried to turn it to good use in furthering the reforms that his investigation led him to propose. He was only partially successful in that instance; but by the end of his life he was a master of publicity, unequalled, probably in Congress; and to his skill at turning on the popular voice, so to speak, he largely owed his last great victory, the passage of the 1962 drug act.

He had a large following, in short, and turned the fact to his advantage. The question of his liberalism, which made him famous, is a matter of some controversy. American intellectuals have never taken kindly to hayscows, for reasons that do them little credit; and Kefauver, who graduated cum laude from Yale Law School, posed as a hayscow, most zealous in his last years, when the logic of his views on economics had led him to take up positions which looked more radical than they were. The New Republic crowd were perhaps ready to take him up as a lovable mascot, an anomalous but harmless figure who suddenly died on them. At long last, this occurrence has prevented the emergence of a spurious Kefauver myth, like that which has come to surround the former Senator Sam Ervin; but it has also, in the process, made it possible to discover the man behind the myth. To a man of his intelligence and ethical fastidiousness there was little to be said for the accustomed rituals of the political approach to the people; but no other way was available, so he entered into them with a play-acting spirit which (and this was perhaps his magic) he assumed that the voters would share. For that there was a twinkle in his eye, he was always as if he were in the Senate. But he was never artificial, pompous or condescending, even when he was most in earnest.

The point he made with his example was that if electioneering was the only means by which the people could be reached about their own welfare, then one had better get on with it. A man with a less kindly view of other human beings could never have attained such wisdom. And it worked, as is shown by the fact that he could make himself ridiculous without for a moment weakening people's serious affection for him. He could appear in public wearing two right shoes, so that, according to Nancy, he looked as if he was coming round a corner all the time; or slide down a baggage chute into the middle of a waiting crowd when no portable stair arrived at his plane's door; and still the voters listened to what he had to say. In this respect the only politician he reminds me of at all

# The senator in the skoonskin cap

By Hugh Brogan

CHARLES L. FONTENAY:  
Estes Kefauver: a biography  
424pp. University of Tennessee Press. \$18.50.  
0 87049 262 4

rate they stood there loving him, while reporters chattered their heads. One of them commented, "Something had happened. They got it. I didn't."

All the same, it is not surprising that, as Mr. Fontenay shows but does not, perhaps, sufficiently emphasize, Kefauver's appeal was always at its greatest in farming areas. In the 1950s, before the great collapse in the agrarian population, when thousands of voters were still to be garnered from it, politicians were always promising to save the family farm. Kefauver was foremost among them. Coming as he did from rural Tennessee, he knew how to talk to farmers, and he was perhaps seen to best advantage shaking hands at a country crossroads or making a speech outside a country store. This style proved immensely appealing not just to Southern dirt farmers (to many of whom, as a matter of fact, he seemed dangerously liberal) but to the people of the Middle and Far West as well. Some of his greatest primary victories came in such states as Minnesota and Wisconsin. He met his Waterloo in 1956 in the California primary, where the farm vote was being overtaken by new suburbs, which preferred the more urbane Adlai Stevenson. It must have comforted Kefauver somewhat that the competition he represented had been so keen that Stevenson was forced to dress up in cowboy gear to prove that he was just as much folks as he of Estes; and that, while so arrayed, he met Kefauver, who was wearing an elephant suit (this story is not told by Mr. Fontenay). The consoling cap had been abandoned when Kefauver's ten-year-old son told him that it was all right for kids playing at Davy Crockett. But not for their fathers.

Mr. Fontenay brings out beautifully, in pages which I mean to plagiarize at the earliest opportunity, the importance of Kefauver's rich sense of humour. It was a good thing that a man so accident-prone knew how to smile at himself: he once had to make a speech with both hands in his trouser pockets because he had somehow lost his chosen to focus our attention on his legendary mild patience in the face of endless obstruction in Congress; his relations with his most ingenious opponent, the Republican Everett Dirksen, were pleasingly warm. In his best passage Mr. Fontenay shows that there was more to it than that. Kefauver was notoriously withdrawn and hard to fathom in his private relations— even his wife Nancy said that it was hard to tell what he was thinking, but in his youth he had been a lively, extroverted, and his humour was the means by which he made himself to his old attitude. To a man of his intelligence and ethical fastidiousness there was little to be said for the accustomed rituals of the political approach to the people; but no other way was available, so he entered into them with a play-acting spirit which (and this was perhaps his magic) he assumed that the voters would share. For that there was a twinkle in his eye, he was always as if he were in the Senate. But he was never artificial, pompous or condescending, even when he was most in earnest.

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is Winston Churchill, who got us through the war, I am firmly convinced, because we found he could make us laugh.

Kefauver can stand, therefore, as a model democratic politician, except in one respect: it is not clear how much he achieved. His quest for the Presidency was never likely to succeed (Mr. Fontenay argues that he might have beaten Eisenhower if he had won the Democratic nomination in 1952, but I doubt if he convinces himself and he certainly does not convince me). It distracted him from his Senate career for five years, and may have shortened his life, so exhausting was his method of campaigning. It diminished his influence by deepening his alienation from his party's leadership, which was never certain that he had abandoned his ambition; in particular it is hard to account for the reserve which President Kennedy showed towards Kefauver except on the hypothesis that Kennedy always saw in him a possible rival. After all, the two men had competed for the Vice-Presidential nomination in 1956, and Kefauver had won—largely, Robert Kennedy thought, because of the 55,000 cards which he sent out every Christmas.

Kefauver's great Senatorial hearings had only mixed results. The investigations into organized crime only gradually claimed the attention of the citizens, but by the time they reached their climax in New York an enormous radio and television audience was being entertained, horrified and instructed by the long procession of picturesque villains that the Kefauver committee workers marshalled: The Walker, the New York Greasy Thumb, Joe Batters, and Smiling Jimmy Sullivan, a crooked sheriff from Florida. Many a shady deal between the mob and the politicians was uncovered (to the great injury of the Democratic party and consequent indignation of President Truman) and loud were the cries for reform. There were few other immediate results, and critics like to point to the fact as a proof of Kefauver's failure. From his own point of view the matter was less clear-cut. True, he and his colleagues were disappointed by the failure of Congress to act on their recommendations. But Kefauver thought that to educate the public was worthwhile in itself, and he had certainly done so (thereby launching the age of sophistication). Second, the committee's activities stimulated a great deal of local reform: Florida, for example, was cleaned up, ceasing to be, at least so glaringly as before, the mobsters' second home. Third, a fair number of the reforms proposed by the committee were eventually passed into law when Robert Kennedy was Attorney-General. As reforms go, always slow and incomplete, this is not a disgraceful score.

It would be interesting to know more about Kefauver's relations with Robert Kennedy, who seems to have acted, consciously or not, in several ways as the Senator's good angel. It was Kennedy who pushed into law some of the proposals arising from Kefauver's investigation of juvenile delinquency, he who successfully prosecuted seven of the great steel companies for price-fixing, he who put through the Kefauver-sponsored Antitrust Civil Process Act of 1962. Kennedy was Kefauver's sort of Attorney-General; but it is doubtful if either man ever recognized the fact.

The centre of Kefauver's political programme was his commitment to anti-trust, and the crown of his anti-trust career was of course the Kefauver-Harris Drug Control Act of 1962. The story of its passage has often been told, and Mr. Fontenay adds little to it. But he does the story justice, and brings out, as any honest narrator must, what an ambiguous achievement it was. For the childlike disaster that Kefauver would not have got any sort of bill through the 1962 session of Congress; when the childlike disaster broke, the Kennedy Administration took over the bill and cut out all Kefauver's anti-trust provisions, leaving in only the health safeguards. The law remained a notable

achievement; surveyed dispassionately, however, its limitations are more apparent than its virtues. It did nothing to make American doctors and patients less anxious to throw drugs at every ailment, and nothing to encourage greater economic efficiency in the production of medicines. In this way the intentions of both the President and the Senator were circumvented. Kefauver, heir to the old Jeffersonian and Wilsonian faith that he was, believed that effective anti-trust laws would tend to restore primitive capitalist competition, and thus preserve America from both creeping corporatism and creeping socialism. The economists round Kennedy, notably J. K. Galbraith, would have dismissed such views as merely quaint, but they did believe that anti-trust activity might help curtail inflation, as the clash with the steel companies in 1962 seemed to prove. The Drug Act, in this light, could satisfy neither party: American drug manufacturers were left at liberty to continue their monopolistic, profligate and greedy ways; and no doubt they will be undercut by Japanese producers any day now, like the producers of American cars.

At the moment Kefauver's most potent legacy seems to be his re-animation of the primary elections. In 1952 Harry Truman dismissed primaries as "eyewash"; then Kefauver trounced him in the New Hampshire primary, and was generally credited with forcing the President to make a prompt declaration of his intention to retire. Kefauver subsequently entered thirteen other primaries, won all but two of them, and would quite possibly have got the presidential nomination if his campaign had been better organized. Nobody has dismissed primaries as eyewash since.

Kefauver threw his considerable weight behind Stevenson after his own defeat in 1956, largely because "I've got a lot of respect for a man who gets into the primaries and fights it out, as Adlai did." In 1960, obeying the hint, J. F. Kennedy used the primaries to establish his pre-eminence in the eyes of the voters; in 1972 and 1976 McGovern and Carter used the primaries to impose themselves on their party; and Carter has explicitly stated his admiration for Kefauver's example. Given the exhausting, expensive, irrational way in which the primaries are at present conducted, that example is perhaps a mixed one; but though the system may be reformed, it is unlikely to be abolished. So Kefauver's essential doctrine, that the people not the party bosses must choose the candidates, will stand.

The legacy which Kefauver's friends would most like to see realized is his character. It would indeed be a good thing if, now and in the future, Americans could profit from the spectacle of his rigid integrity, his political courage and fair-mindedness, his ceaseless devotion to his duty as he saw it, and his warmth. Fontenay makes a record of these things readily available. A Nashville journalist, he was close enough to see Kefauver plain, but not so close that his independent judgement was compromised. He writes, extensively and not merely better than most American academics, which is poor praise, but better than most American journalists, which is not. He has an implicit command of the sources, especially of the Tennessee papers; he judges intelligently and argues persuasively. The book is handsomely produced by the press of Kefauver's first university, where his papers are now deposited. All in all, it makes a worthy memorial.

# Reliving the Great Story

By John Mole

ROGER KNIGHT:  
Edwin Muir  
An introduction to his work  
210pp. Longman. £8.50 (paperback), £4.95 (hardback).  
0 582 489 01 6

When his last full collection of new poems, *One Foot in Eden*, was made a Poetry Book Society Choice in the Spring of 1980, Edwin Muir wrote in the Society's Bulletin:

I have been asked to say something about poetry and at the moment can think of nothing to say except that there can be no certain definition of poetry, and that if there were it would be of no use to anyone. . . . One might as well demand a definition of mankind before setting out to become acquainted with people. We learn about poetry in much the same way as we learn about human beings, that is by coming to know it and them.

At first glance, this may seem unremarkable, even typical of the slightly off-hand easiness which afflicts certain lauded poets when called upon to speak definitively about their own work. But, anyone

at all acquainted with the slow, painstaking and ultimately triumphant development of Muir's poetic career—so admirably retraced in Roger Knight's book—will recognize it as a summation. Its comment on a lifetime's experience, modest in tone and profound in implication, is at the same time a mirror of Muir's own career, one of the most undemonstrative and unfashionable of this century's British poets—discreetly stubborn, incapable of distraction, absorbed by a central myth at the heart of which lay his own deep personal need to confront those three mysteries "with which our minds are possessed . . . where we came from, where we are going, and since we are not alone, but members of a countless family, how we should live with one another."

Overwhelmed by a sense of exile from the Orkneys of his childhood, a stable world of enduring values which lay his own deep personal need to confront those three mysteries "with which our minds are possessed . . . where we came from, where we are going, and since we are not alone, but members of a countless family, how we should live with one another."

life of every man is an endlessly repeated performance of the life of man; this story increased its hold on Muir throughout his middle years, both provoking and resolving crises in his personal life, as he became acutely conscious of modern urban society's impersonal systems. On the one hand there was his extreme sense of an induced manhood of spirit inherent in modern civilization, first experienced as part of the sudden uprooting when he came from the Orkneys to Glasgow where it seemed "one's neighbour was one's worst enemy," deepening throughout the 1930s to an awareness of the "impenetrable mechanism" of communism, and then most harrowingly witnessed after the 1948 pogrom in Czechoslovakia where he found men "suspectious even of their friends" and where his lectures at Prague University were attended by two communist agents who took down everything he said. On the other hand there was what Roger Knight calls his tough purity as an artist, characterized by an inability to write what would merely serve the moment.

All this made him particularly at odds with the literary climate of the 1930s. Convinced that it was an essential weakness in writers to be "mere expressions of the thing of which they should be the contemplators," and that (in the words of his admirer, Hofmannsthal) "powerful imagination requires a conservative," he worked towards a "conservative" poetic method, which, while appearing to lack the obvious urgency of immediate social comment, confronted the personal and released the human conflict, disturbing emblematic powers which he referred to as "the infinite" and "the absolute powers" behind the visible drama. . . . Writing to Stephen Spender in 1936 he said: "I think that I would like to write poetry that would be some way beyond that face which I actually started writing something about to the 'with socialism' or 'the danger' in some way, but I don't know if I can do it." There is something else, of course, a

complete transcendence of the doctrinaire, an essentially affirmative, durable poetry born of the quarrel of good and evil felt by Muir to be an eternal quarrel in an imperfect world which inevitably encompasses both and will not be resolved by any reordering of the affairs of State.

Muir's vision of freedom is at one and the same time uniquely personal and a human birthright, a little paradise held in the world's vice, glimpsed and treasured as a little island at moments when the imagination is liberated from the order of time. The element of detachment, that "certain purges of distance in contemplating human life," is no easy option; it is the mark of poetic discipline and the struggle which attained it. For as Muir said in "Variations on a Theme," are dealt with very much as alluded to only in as much as they can serve to the various emotional crises of the fully achieved poems are of a revolution.

Similarly, while Muir's form identification with Kafka is considered in detail, his own novel passed over us the work of a writer not suited to prose fiction. This selectiveness seems almost justified: our understanding of what Muir found in Kafka is like a number of the later poems which—like many of Kafka's—begin "in the midway of life" and end in a decision to die. Time spent on the poem would offend against the injunction to write only out of a capacity for admiration and would distract from the soka of a conscientious thoroughness. It is the poetry, not the novel, that we should read. Muir's personal life—in relation to his poetry—is a matter of detail, not of principle. It is the poetry, not the novel, that we should read. Muir's personal life—in relation to his poetry—is a matter of detail, not of principle. It is the poetry, not the novel, that we should read.

Commenting on Muir's conviction that the job of a literary critic is to be a helpful intermediary between literature and the reader, and that the one indispensable virtue of a critic is "the directive to the reader," he does not exercise his capacity for admiration; he had better leave it alone. Knight is just the right kind of intermediary. His book is a model of patient, untranscended enthusiasm; it is not relentlessly exhaustive, but achieves its purpose by selective concentration. Knight acknowledges the danger that "the Great Story" can, sometimes, seem to be a mere "myth" to seem like telling

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**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS**



## Sectionalism and secession

By W. R. Brock

KENNETH M. STAMPP:

The Imperiled Union  
Essays on the Background of the  
Civil War  
320pp. Oxford University Press.  
£9.75.  
0 19 502681 0

Kenneth Stampp is a distinguished representative of the generation of American scholars who came of age before 1940, experienced war and cold war, became involved in the civil rights movement, were pilloried as "pinks", then as the liberal establishment, and survived the turmoil of student revolt to lead their profession in calmer though puzzling days. His writings, though largely confined to American history of the mid-nineteenth century, reflect the hopes and frustrations of contemporary times. He is an heir of his scholarly works he writes for Fremont in 1856 and Lincoln in 1860: he believes that slavery was an unmitigated evil, that sectional conflict was irrepressible, and that tactical errors in Reconstruction were responsible for the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments. Reconstruction is not covered in these collected essays, but his other interests are. The two essays on slavery can be read as postscripts to his *Pacific Institution*, one dealing gently but critically with Stanley M. Elkins, the other critically and far from gently with Robert Fogel and Sidney Fugerman. The latter essay may have been included for the sake of comprehensiveness, but it is readily available elsewhere. His *Working with Slavery*, and hitherto unpublished reflections on Genovese or Blassingame would have been more appropriate.

A new and major contribution to the inexhaustible topic of sectional conflict is the essay "The Irrepressible Conflict" which contains a historiographical review of "revisionist" interpretations of the largely successful demolition of their arguments. For those not versed in the controversy it should be explained that, when writing on Reconstruction, a "revisionist" is a scholar who believes that Republican policy, aimed at objective reconstruction and morally justifiable, but that, in dealing with the approach to the Civil War, a "revisionist" is one who believes that the conflict was unnecessary, and abolitionism irresponsible, that Republicans exploited the slavery issue while condoning racial discrimination, catastrophe was the work of a "blundering generation", and slavery would have ended without war. Professor Stampp detects a logical flaw when revisionists use themselves as a basis for a hypothesis that slavery would have withered away while refusing to recognize anti-slavery as the product of fundamental forces in nineteenth-century civilization. This is not entirely valid. A stream runs where men may do, but they have a choice to make when harnessing its energy. Surely it was an essential part of the revisionist case that anti-slavery took its place among a wide range of reform movements, but that the abolitionists got it out of proportion? However, it is salutary to question the loose use of such words as "irrepressible", and to make the point that if a tally of irrepressible actions has to be made Southern leaders might knock up a high score. Stampp's argument is correct: that the revisionists erred in failing to recognize that American slavery presented a profound problem which had to be tackled, and in concluding, under the pretence of impartiality, that Northern politicians carried most of the blame.

He deals more respectfully with David Donald who shifted the blame from individuals to domestic institutions, but questions his assertion that other nations have survived worse crises without war. The point is well taken, and Donald's interpretation invites the pertinent comment: What nations and which crises? Kenneth Stampp's criticism of Michael Perman is less satisfactory. It may be excused for underestimating the emotional strength of feeling against the extension of slavery, but this does not dispose of his argument.

That political movements do not make themselves. Whatever the pressure, from behind someone has to organize, decide upon tactics, and get voters to the polls. In the process some politicians serve aims which purists would reject, but it is unrealistic to forget that politicians want to win elections as it is to label idealists as "irresponsible". The seamy side reveals the way in which a garment is held together. Indeed, in his essay on "Race, Slavery and the Republican Party" he admits that "the party has long since lost its pristine image as the political arm of the northern crusade against slavery and injustice". It need hardly be added that, despite this concession, Professor Stampp does not endorse the view that Republicans were really negro-phobes because some wanted the west to be a white man's country and almost all shared a common lead in both sides of the Atlantic in black inferiority. Weakness did not justify enslavement; Abraham Lincoln always maintained that the Declaration of Independence applied to black men; Stephen A. Douglas consistently denied that all men were created equal; and in the general view Republicans were perceived as the men who wished ultimately to extinguish slavery.

To argue that conflict was irrepressible and that Southerners must carry much of the blame for worsening the situation does not prove that war was unavoidable. In an essay first published thirty-five years ago, and here reprinted with minor additions, Professor Stampp says that "the Confederate attack upon Fort Sumter was... a striking victory for Lincoln's defensive strategy". The argument is that Lincoln was determined to restore the Union, but realized that apparent intransigence might divide the North and ruin the cause. It was necessary to appear conciliatory on everything except fundamentals, and place upon the Confederacy the onus of proving itself a hostile power. In pursuing this "defensive strategy" Lincoln's nobles shared the common belief that the contest would be short. This analysis seems to ignore the upper South, and in his more recent writings Professor Stampp usually writes as though controversy was always with the seven states which seceded between December 1860 and February 1862. Yet on April 4, 1861, Virginia voted secession down by ninety votes to forty-five. Unionists held their ground in all other upper South states, but many had not clear that they would not support coercion. Three days after Lincoln's call for arms to suppress "the rebellion", Virginia voted eighty-eight to fifty-five for secession. North Carolina, Tennessee and Arkansas followed; Unionist prospects were jeopardized in Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri, and the issue was placed in doubt. The second secession added enormously to the manpower, resources, and morale of the Confederacy; it shifted the emphasis from a war to protect slavery to a war for independence. Without the war to agitate, even prominent Southerners lacked the will to accept that defeat would be less bitter than those of success.

This argument is a new version of an old Republican theme. To anti-slavery men the righteousness and reasonableness of their cause was so self-evident that secession had to be the work of a self-interested minority. The "slave power" might command the heights of southern society, but the plain people must dislike slavery, love the Union, and hate the aggression of northern fellow countrymen. Even during the war it was a recurrent Northern theme that it was not fought against the southern people but against the secessionists who had misled them. It is a logical extension of this view to argue that even prominent Southerners lacked the will to accept that defeat would be less bitter than those of success.

Cutlough enough, understanding of the upper South unionists who switched "votes" after Sumter is lacking. But the first essay in the book (but one of the latest to be written), "The Concept of a Perpetual Union". In this Stampp explains that "an adequate explanation of the events of 1861 must take into account the fact that the war was fought to preserve the constitutional right of secession had flourished for forty years before a comparable case for a perpetual Union had been devised". It was therefore no accident that in April 1861 the majority in Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Arkansas preferred the ancient to the modern version. And every thing said in those states for twelve months before Sumter indicated that this would be their choice.

This "predictability" prompts another line of thought: Unionists had held their ground in the upper and lower South, but secessionist sympathies had been interpreted as a tacit recognition of Confederate independence. Northern, not Southern, bluff would have been called, and

this could hardly do less than accelerate the momentum of secession. The day on which Virginia left the Union might have been postponed but the tide would not have turned, while doubts about the President's intentions would have played into the hands of Confederate sympathizers in Maryland and Kentucky. Thus the government of the Union stood to lose either way, and the choice lay between action which would rally the North, and admission that the threat of further secession which was nevertheless probable whatever the decision in Washington. Seen in this light, Lincoln's handling of the Sumter crisis was neither success nor failure but the logical and unhappy consequence of his conviction that the Union must be preserved, even when it had clearly fallen apart.

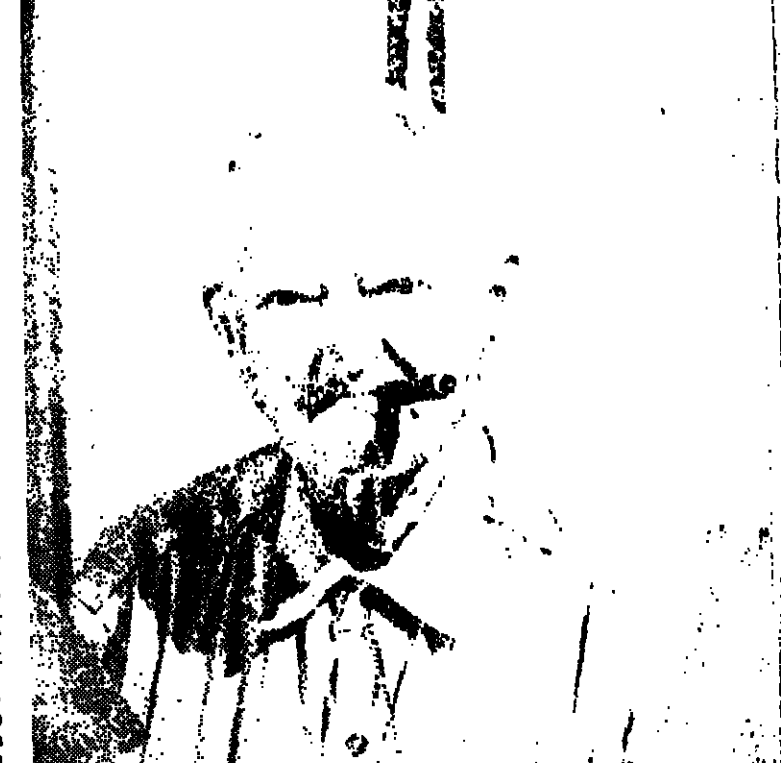
The question which Professor Stampp brushes aside, and to most Northern historians do not even raise, is why the Southern states, seven, eleven, or more of them, could not have been allowed their independence? National interest might have made it necessary to hold all. All parties were inconsistent, but in the general view Republicans were perceived as the men who wished ultimately to extinguish slavery.

In the last essay Professor Stampp leaves the causes of war to advance an argument which is bound to attract attention and perhaps indignation. "In the Confederacy", he writes, "weak morale was not simply the ultimate consequence of war weariness; the problem was present at its birth. It was the product of its uncertainty about the South's identity, of the peculiar circumstances that led to secession and the attempt at independence, and of widespread doubt and apprehension about the validity of the Confederate cause." In a provocative final sentence he concludes that many Southerners "felt that the fruits of defeat would be less bitter than those of success".

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John Nance Garner, aged ninety, photographed by Alfred Eisenstadt in 1934. Garner, also known as "Cactus Jack", was Vice President of the United States under the first Franklin D. Roosevelt administrations (1933-41). The picture appears in *Witness to Our Time* (Secker and Warburg, 350pp. £12.50 hardcover, £6.95 paperback), along with many other brilliant examples of Eisenstadt's work as one of the outstanding cameramen covering the international scene—principally in the 1930s and 1940s. The book is a collection of his photographs, ranging from Dr Goebbels to Dr Walldheim, from Al Jolson to Mikhail Bulgakov.

## Nonconforming natives

By Anthony Pagden

BERNARD W. SHEEHAN:

Savagism and Civility  
Indians and Englishmen in Colonial  
Virginia  
258pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£15 (paperback, £4.95).  
0 521 22927 8

The past few years have witnessed a growing interest in the intellectual history of the earliest contacts between Europeans and the American Indians. This interest mirrors a change which has taken place in our view of "primitive peoples". Native Americans no longer appear in the guise of the brutish, murderous opponents to the white man's progress, nor even in the image of child-like savages, brutal because they were ignorant and without the mode of social behaviour. Today we have come to see them as the victims of European greed and belief in the absolute supremacy of European culture. In Brazil and Paraguay, in the United States and Canada there are still some who look on the American Indian as an inferior being and from their nations' law accordingly, but historians, at least, have abandoned their attempts to justify the conquest of America and have turned instead to an examination of its ideological foundations.

Francis Jennings's influential work, *The Invasion of America*, used a wide range of evidence to demonstrate how English moralizing on the treatment of Indians amounted to a "system of ideas designed for the conqueror's needs". And his work on the English sources has since been complemented by the wide-ranging studies on European material by Sergio Landucci and Giuliano Giorzi. The questions that these scholars have set out to answer is: with what mental attitudes did Europeans approach the members of an alien world whose resources they were eager to exploit? In other words, how could those who wrote about the American Indian and his world formulate their impressions?

Bernard Sheehan's book explores this same question in terms of two antithetical categories of "Ideas" which he has termed "Savagism" and "Civility". His thesis is simple and basically convincing: one Englishman in America thought of himself as belonging to a world of "civility". They believed that the norms which governed their society were the optimal ones for all men and it only means by which it was possible to live a fully human life. All those who, like the Indians, did not conform to these norms were inferior to the white man's world at the bottom end of the scale of being, closer to the beast than to man. All relations between Indians and Englishmen occurred "within the limits of a customary division between savagism and civility". And not only were these fixed and all-embracing categories an insuperable barrier, any kind of real understanding of Indian culture, they were also a stimulation for certain kinds of action. Once he had classified the Indian as a "savage", the Englishman's only possible dealings with him would be violent ones.

*Savagism and Civility* covers a wide range of material and this reviewer over the familiar ground from the first contacts of the sixteenth century, when some of the first Englishmen arrived in North America, to the late nineteenth century, when the last of the Indian wars were fought. The book is a well-written and readable history of the English view of the American Indian, and it is a pleasure to find a book which does not merely repeat the old story of the Indian as a savage, but which also shows how the English view of the Indian changed over time.

## Sociability before reason

By R. C. Simmons

GARRY WILLS:  
Inventing America  
Jefferson's Declaration of Independence  
398pp. Athlone Press. £12.50.  
0 485 11201 9

Despite the necessarily specialized and technical nature of many of Garry Wills's arguments, *Inventing America* seems in the United States to have raised ideological as well as scholarly temperatures. Mr Wills seeks to show that in 1776 the star of John Locke shone dimly if at all in Thomas Jefferson's mental universe. A brighter sun had travelled from northern climes to beam down the rays of the Scottish enlightenment. Jefferson, under the influence of such writers as Thomas Reid and Francis Hutcheson, exalted sociability, benevolence and community. He probably viewed property as an "adventitious right" and valued moral feeling above reason. For those of Mr Wills's critics who still consider the Declaration a holy text, sanctifying possessive individualism and justifying government only as the protector of life and property, Wills commits a cardinal sin. He obviously aims to supply the history of the Republic with a pink dawn as possible," wrote one American pundit.

Such criticism belongs to a world of historical chic, to adapt a phrase, and although Mr Wills moved and presumably does still move in the rarified world of the higher ideologies (conservatives, neo-conservatives and neo-neo-conservatives), a fact that has not hurt the American marketing and promotion of his book, no imputation about its value can be made on that score. Mr Wills had read widely; he writes with skill and seriousness. Moreover he deserves praise for his lively interest in a subject on which the scholarly consensus was largely frozen in terms laid down by the late Carl Becker in 1922. The question is whether in the end he succeeds in changing our understanding of Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence.

He suggests that the preliminary connection between Jefferson and the Scottish enlightenment sprang

from the young Virginian's tutelage under William Small, an expatriate Scottish teacher, at William and Mary College. In his autobiography Jefferson writes that Small "made me his daily companion when not engaged in the school" and that from Small he acquired his "first views of the expansion of science and of the system of things in which we are placed". Small lectured on ethics, rhetoric and belles lettres, and it is a reasonable supposition, strengthened by other thought evidence, that Jefferson became acquainted with the available books of the Scottish enlightenment.

According to Mr Wills, Jefferson's readings continued and deepened up to 1776 and the moment when he took up his quill to inscribe the words that with the rising power of America have become known around the world. So we are to continue to believe that the Declaration reflects the natural law rationalism of John Locke or that it may even have been composed by Jefferson with Locke's *Second Treatise* either open before him or read in his mind. Jefferson drew his words and ideas from men who stood at "a conscious and deliberate distance from Locke's political principles".

Yet when it comes to an exposition of these political principles, Mr Wills is curiously silent. Nowhere does he provide a systematic account of the views of those Scots whom Jefferson might have read on political obligation. He touches on Francis Hutcheson's views which were allegedly an influence on Jefferson. But Hutcheson seems in his political views to be close to Locke and the Whig tradition. Otherwise Mr Wills by default locates Jefferson's intellectual debt to the Scottish enlightenment as the origin of the original consent, of legislative powers, and of the right of revolution within what Duncan Forbes has called vulgar Whiggism. Since this in its main essentials resembled, even if it did not necessarily derive from, Locke's arguments the force of the author's contentions almost disappears or at least becomes irrelevant. And when we look again at the *Second Treatise*, we can see what Mr Wills apparently failed to note: there are paragraphs (and even whole sections) of the *Treatise* which are nothing more than paraphrases of the Declaration of Independence.

There is also a discussion by Locke of what Mr Wills believes to

be a "theoretical novelty" in Jefferson's draft, the extent to which emigration (expatriation) involved withdrawal of political consent from a home government. There is the persistent theme of the *Second Treatise* that "the liberty of man in society is to be under no legislative power but that established by consent in the Commonwealth" which reminds us of the structure of the Declaration with its emphasis on the evidence is overwhelmingly against Mr Wills's views and explains Jefferson's own statement that "Locke's little book on Government is perfect as far as it goes".

Mr Wills diminishes the weight of these self-evident truths either by rhetorical stratagems or by his own curious bifurcation of Jefferson's draft of the Declaration. This is achieved by treating its so-called "political" sections as a "congressional document" or "revolutionary charter" and by making the "heart" of his analysis what he calls "Jefferson's draft" which has thus been conveniently truncated to allow Mr Wills to define it as "philosophical" that is in the eighteenth-century sense of the word. Despite the convenience of this strategy, it is doubtful that Mr Wills satisfactorily demonstrates that the "philosophical" sections owed more to Scottish moral feeling philosophy than Lockean rationalism. His argument rests less on the language of Jefferson's draft than on inferential evidence and the taken from Jefferson's post-1776 writings. A technical exploration of Mr Wills's argument simultaneously with *Inventing America* and its author, Morton White, places Jefferson among the rationalists.

Certainly Mr Wills's whole treatment of the moral sense philosophers is biased, since, he suggests, picking up the tag that "ploughmen are as well able as professors to comprehend moral truths", that "the great moral sense philosophers of the eighteenth century" held that the moral faculty belonged to all men no less than seventeenth-century Puritans argued the same for "conscience". But the gulf between such formulations and their authors' social or political philosophy is so wide that the problem is even more

acute. Mr Wills holds that when Jefferson wrote of blacks that whether further observation will or will not verify the conjecture that nature has been less bountiful to them in the endowments of the head, I believe that in those of the heart she will have been found to do them justice; he was in fact expressing an egalitarian sentiment, since (1) the heart (moral sense) was superior to the head (reason), and (2) for Jefferson the "moral sense is not only man's highest faculty but the one that is equal in all men". This ignores Jefferson's view that reason had to guide the moral feeling and that deficiency in reason created a presumption of inferiority.

In several central ways Mr Wills fails to overturn Becker's view of the Declaration. Not is he always sound on the historical events that led to the decision of the Continental Congress to declare independence. Yet his book does have redeeming virtues of liveliness and intellectual curiosity, a willingness to probe and examine that is fresh and attractive. Much of this proceeds from his method of glossing certain words and phrases in a speculative attempt to show in a Jefferson may have used them as a man of his time. A very interesting case is made for Jefferson as sentimentalist in an explication of a feature of the Declaration that has never before received sufficient attention: Jefferson's emphasis not only on rights or the revolutionary component of independence but on one people "dissolving the bands that have connected them with another".

## Taking to the streets

By Rhodi Jeffreys-Jones

MICHAEL FELDBERG:  
The Turbulent Era  
Riots and Disorder in Jacksonian  
America  
136pp. Oxford University Press.  
£5.92.  
0 19 502672 2

The history of social violence may be studied for the light it throws on the effectiveness of violence as a tactic, on the state of society in a given period, or on the causes of increases and decreases in particular types of violence. Many historians of the subject have confined themselves to just one of these aspects. Michael Feldberg's essay on Jacksonian riots is the more thought-provoking because he has addressed himself to all three aspects simultaneously.

Feldberg shows how riots could be seen as achieving certain goals. These goals varied from the prevention of property-devaluing railway construction through the heart of Philadelphia in 1840, to the assertion of nativist political power in the 1850s. By and large, he argues, riots were successful, backed by majority opinion and aimed at preserving the status quo by putting newcomers in their place.

Some riots apparently had no goal, but serve as indicators of the state of Jacksonian society. 1830-1860. Disorientation brought on by the shock of industrialization and urbanization is indicated by the need of youths to congregate into gangs, and to reinforce their newly found group identities by fighting other gangs. The unassuming monotony of urban life in Jacksonian America is attested to by riots which, Feldberg argues, had the main object simple recreation. Street battles between rival companies of firefighters racing to a fire sometimes proved so diverting for the participants that they never arrived at the scene of the emergency.

In an incisive review of some of the theories purporting to explain social violence, Feldberg points out that most of the rioters were people of social and economic standing, and that it would therefore be unrealistic to attribute Jacksonian riots to uneducated, unskilled, and economic conditions. He is on equally firm ground in showing that the ethnological explanation, "the theory that we are all governed by animal aggressiveness, fails to suggest a pattern in the distribution of violence."

Such glossing sometimes leads to a tedious exhibition of examples of contemporary usage but is often brilliantly done. Surprisingly, however, Mr Wills never glosses the word "people" and usually prefers to examine the literary or scientific rather than the social or political content of such "key words"—further evidence of his bifurcation of the Declaration. Nor, despite his faith in the influence of the Scottish enlightenment, does he examine its philosophical or "scientific" and "sociological" history, treating, for example, when in the course of human events "in a Newtonian context."

A final and harsh verdict not on Mr Wills but on his British publishers. The disparity in price between the American (Random House, \$10. Vintage paperback, \$4.50) and British editions is so astonishing that it merits more than the usual oblique comment. Who can afford to buy the British edition? And why should they? Some price adjustment might have been acceptable had the Athlone Press issued a second edition with typographical corrections and perhaps a new author's foreword, replying to his American critics. Yet the text appears to be a photographic copy of the original American pages, and seems to contain even typographical corrections of obvious errors. A sad state of affairs but perhaps one that would appeal to the shades of those Americans who in 1776 may have believed that they would eventually benefit from commercial as well as political independence from Great Britain.

Feldberg judiciously dwells on the ideological origins of violence. On the one hand, he reminds us that if there is a tradition of violence in American society, there is an equally firm one of respect for the law. On the other hand, he suggests that, while violence may be inimical to democracy, the democratic spirit in America did lead to majoritarian excesses.

Looking for an explanation of what he maintains was the exceptional turbulence of the Jacksonian era, Feldberg emphasizes the weakness of the police, and especially the absence of preventative foot patrols. After the Civil War, the larger cities remedied this deficiency. Together with the introduction of compulsory schooling of a moral-disciplinary hue, better policing reduced the incidence of rioting in post-Jacksonian America.

The evident strengths of Feldberg's book are to some degree undermined by its equally evident weaknesses. Arguing that the "melting pot" process reduced ethnic friction, he does not even admit the existence of the alternative, more liberal view, that the toleration of differences in a "salad bowl" society might have been more conducive to peace in the long run. Though he attacks the oppression thesis as an explanation of Jacksonian riots, he uses it himself in relation to the industrial violence of the late nineteenth century. Instead of substantiating his contention that Irish Protestants and Irish Catholics were at each other's throats in the United States, he tells us that "Oliver Cromwell slaughtered millions of Irish peasants in the name of Anglican Protestantism".

Feldberg's most glaring weakness is his reluctance to use precise quantification. His contention that urban riots were relatively uncommon in the 1870s must therefore remain a controversial hypothesis, and his hint that there existed a "positive relationship between Jacksonian riots and war" merely hints.

Much of what Feldberg says is based upon his research for an earlier book, on the Philadelphia nativist riots of 1844. In supplementing his earlier scholarship, he has drawn mainly on secondary literature, to which he includes a short but useful guide. Feldberg has, then, preferred intelligent synthesis to research into new sources. In his declared aim of subordinating scholarly trappings to a readable prose style, he succeeds well. He deserves the wide readership for which his book is designed.

## Manuring the Tree of Liberty

By Peter Marshall

DAVID P. SZATMARY:  
Shays' Rebellion  
or Making of an Agrarian  
Insurrection  
224pp. Amherst University of  
Massachusetts Press. \$14.  
0 87023 295 9

In January and February 1787 a series of skirmishes took place in Western Massachusetts between the militia and armed farmers. Although the casualties were light, Shays' Rebellion marked the climax of differences which had been growing more pronounced for some months and which, for still longer, had reflected stresses within the nation as a whole and New England in particular. The episode became known as Shays' or Shays' Rebellion—its historians do not seem agreed even on the proper form of its title—though whether Daniel Shays was the actual leader is uncertain. David Szatmary considers Shays to have played a part more akin to the later role of "Captain Swing" than to the personal command of physical protest.

He reports Shays's later denial that he had led the closing of the Hampshire County Court and his declaration that he had never had any hand in the matter. It was done by "committees". The somewhat feeble outcome of the affair might well seem to provide confirmation.

The rebellion, nevertheless, has attracted more historical attention than it might seem. In substance, it throws suddenly into context what the world so unlike their own. It is a Spanish Franciscan, not a native American, who is the focus of the book. The author's old world for the things of this new one

able nature: David Szatmary's account justifies its length by placing Shays' Rebellion in the context of other examples of crowd action, mainly as presented by European historians, and by describing the social and economic conditions, as taking place between areas which, in the years before 1776, had been productive of radical political rhetoric. Shays' Rebellion seemed unaccompanied by further appeals of that kind. The complaints were economic but alleged that the government was not taking account of the needs of the poor. They may not have been seriously influenced by the making of the new Constitution, then under way in Philadelphia, but it certainly impressed some of the founding fathers with the need for a more radical approach to the problem of the poor.

In retrospect these alarms may appear as unjustified as Thomas Jefferson, viewing events from the calming distance of Paris, asserted. He denied that "the single instance of Massachusetts" was of any significance.

What agony a few lives lost in a century or two? The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its [sic] natural manure. Our Convention has been too much impressed by the false notion of Massachusetts, and in the spur of the moment they are setting up a kite to keep the hen yard in order.

Jefferson's conclusion, if not his argument, may seem justified. As it happened, collapse rather than suppression marked an end to the Rebellion. Shays himself incurred no worse punishment than that of becoming a farmer in Vermont. The events to which his name is attached remain a matter of interest but seem unlikely, in the present state of knowledge, to grow in historical significance.















# Mind before brain

## Evaluating the past

## LITERATURE

## Keeping up with the post-moderns

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# Sixty inglorious years

By C. D. Ross

J. R. LANDER:  
Government and Community  
England 1450-1509  
406pp. Edward Arnold. £12.95  
(paperback, £5.95).  
0 7131 6151 5

J. R. Lander's new book is largely an expansion and up-dating of his earlier writing on a period to which he has devoted twenty-five years of research. Our knowledge and understanding of the age would be much the poorer without it. This new book differs from his lively if brief survey of 1952, *Conflict and Stability in Fifteenth-Century England*, in that it greatly extends the discussion of the turbulent and controversial politics of the age, which now commands some 200 pages out of a total of 387. In the process the author draws largely (sometimes too heavily) on themes discussed by him in his recent *Crown and Nobility, 1450-1509* (1977).

As a historian, Professor Lander has many enviable virtues. His work is based upon a wide and well-deployed grasp of original sources; he has a sharp eye for essential themes, some of which are unduly neglected; he appreciates the many contradictory features of the age; he writes lucidly and trenchantly; and he has a gift for apt and telling

illustration of his themes. In discussing the somewhat materialistic approach of the fifteenth century to religion—merchandising with God—Lander's bargaining with the church not only for a bright future in the next world but for divine approval of one's enterprises in this—he neatly pinpoints the "devotional avarice" of that account-keeping Henry VII: demanding prayer and later salvation, he bound over his "militant Christi" in legal indentures to carry out their duties, just as though he were recruiting a mercenary army. Lander also makes good use of comparisons with continental experience to support his claim that England was "by contemporary standards, a peaceful and prosperous country": this despite an appalling crime rate, even by our standards (Chief Justice John Fortescue once boasted that more men were hanged in England for robbery in one year than in France in seven).

All this does not mean that the book is without its blemishes. Vigour often goes with assertiveness, and the author is often inclined to press a good idea too far, and, having made up his mind, to cling stubbornly to his position through thick and thin. His critics are told—politely—to recant the errors of their ways and to return to the true beliefs, here unrepentantly reasserted. For example, Lander continues to believe, despite subsequent criticism, that the reign of Edward IV was a political re-orientation of his themes. In discussing the somewhat materialistic approach of the fifteenth century to religion—merchandising with God—Lander's bargaining with the church not only for a bright future in the next world but for divine approval of one's enterprises in this—he neatly pinpoints the "devotional avarice" of that account-keeping Henry VII: demanding prayer and later salvation, he bound over his "militant Christi" in legal indentures to carry out their duties, just as though he were recruiting a mercenary army. Lander also makes good use of comparisons with continental experience to support his claim that England was "by contemporary standards, a peaceful and prosperous country": this despite an appalling crime rate, even by our standards (Chief Justice John Fortescue once boasted that more men were hanged in England for robbery in one year than in France in seven).

## The promotion of parliament

By Kevin Sharpe

BARRY COWARD:  
The Stuart Age  
A History of England 1603-1714  
493pp. Longman. £13.  
0 582 48279 8

Only two kinds of person, perhaps, enter a minefield fearlessly: the totally ignorant and one completely familiar with the terrain. The textbook writer is neither. Knowing from his own experience only a corner of the minefield, equipped with charts drawn by others, charts often unreliable and sometimes contradictory. No historical territory has proved more hazardous than the Stuart century. Issues and controversies multiply, the passage of time and the flood of new academic research lie in wait here many a promising historical reputation has been destroyed. Barry Coward must be commended for tackling this first book; for tackling the Stuart century, for not flinching from the issues, and for braving assaults.

In his initial section, Dr Coward surveys the economy, society and culture as well as the government of early Stuart England. His chapters on population, agriculture, industry and trade, being both broad and concise, provide a splendid introduction to the age. They also acquaint the student with the sources used by historians and the problems they present. In his sketch of the economy, the author never fails to remind his readers of the limitations of the evidence from an age which produced few statistics. In his survey of society he exhibits a healthy scepticism towards the over-zealous (and unduly critical) substitution of raw techniques (demography or sociology) for old common sense. On attitudes and ideas, however, Coward's touch is less sure, and the section on religion is rather wooden and spiritless. The rigour on ideas read like a catalogue of names from the museum of past intellectual history. But the material world is firmly fixed and provides a valuable foundation for the narrative—primarily concerned with politics and government—which gives the book its shape.

Though he deplores the artificial and unnecessary baroque of 1680, Coward divides his account into three additional sections: 1603-1640, 1640-1660, 1660-1688 and 1688-1714. The first of these, the early Stuart period, has been of late the area of most research and, perhaps, of most

contention. In his description of parliament as primarily a body for the articulation of local grievances, and in his emphasis on the strains of war, it is clear that Coward has been greatly influenced by Russell's monumental study of *Parliaments and English Politics*. But the work of "revisionist" historians has not been fully assimilated: upon it is not always comprehensible—especially to those unfamiliar with recent research. The relationship of faction at court to arguments in parliament and the central theme, but it is one which here hangs over the narrative like a mist—all-embracing and preventing clear vision. The personalities of the age—the monarch, peers and MPs—never quite emerge.

More successful is the second section, on the English Revolution. Coward prefaces his admirably clear narrative here with a salutary insistence on the importance of short-term changes and events in understanding the outbreak and course of the English Civil War. He warns of the dangers of hindsight: Charles I's had a fair chance of success, the restoration of the Stuarts was far from obvious at the death of Cromwell. At times the narrative and

fluency attributed to the Woodville family, the jealous and grasping relatives of Edward IV's Queen, Elizabeth, have been grossly exaggerated. One can only hope that his peace of mind has not been too much disturbed by a recent search inquiring (by M. A. Hicks), which presumably appeared too late for Lander to make it under consideration, showing conclusively that, on the contrary, Woodville gains and political influence were far greater than he had supposed, even in the first decade of Edward's reign, and became greater still, and politically far more malign, in the second decade.

Similarly, the author's examination in an earlier essay of the financial preparations for Edward IV's invasion of France in 1475 led him to assert, as a generalization, that "Taxation for aggressive warfare—the English would not tolerate and appeals for taxation for defence they found almost totally unconvincing".

This, he argues, placed them in a financial straitjacket by comparison with their peers abroad and, by reducing their capacity for effective military action, advanced diminished them to the status of minnows in a pond of European powers. This seems to ignore the fact that, for different reasons, both Edward IV and Henry VII chose not to indulge in foreign wars, by doing so achieved an independence of parliamentary restraint by developing revenue sources fully

under their own control. And, if VIII is right, how was Henry VIII able to break through taxpayer resistance for expeditions to France and against Scotland within four years of his father's death? Lander also greatly exaggerates the dangers of domestic discontent if the kings of his period tried to increase taxation: only one of its many rebellions was connected with taxpayers' resentment.

For the rest, for the larger part of the book one can have little but praise. There are useful surveys, often with illuminating insights, devoted to economic life, government ("by the few, by the rich and to a great extent for the rich"), royal finance, religious life, and education and the arts. Lander rightly praises Edward's achievement: in these two latter fields. Yet overall he sees the age as through a glass darkly, an impression heightened by his penchant for the use of pejorative adjectives, such as "misguided", "wretched", "dearly", "nightmarish", which appear with alarming frequency. He finds much to blame and little to praise in an age which produced no Englishman of real stature. Arguably, this is too gloomy a view.

Mainly in the political sections, the book contains a number of errors and misleading assertions. Lander still refuses to believe that Edward IV was made king by anything, more than "a miserable pump", among the lords; Warwick the Kingmaker's clash with the court party arose out of a quarrel over Glamorgan, unconnected with

his Nevill kinsmen's quarrel with the Percy family in the North. Lander suggests, the doctrine of "private prayer," to which attaches so much importance, is in fact only one of many tant copies of the same orange. Henry Percy, fourth earl of Northumberland, who played so conspicuous a role at Bosworth, was not immediately restored to his office as Lord of the Tower for a month; and there is a good chance that more than a mere handful of peers named by the author supported Richard III at Bosworth. The claim that the battle of Tewkesbury (February, 1471) was "the greatest battle so far seen in the Wars of the Roses" is supported by any evidence, save strange indeed, for, judging by the number of noblemen involved, the most general criterion as to the size of the armies—it was a far smaller battle than either Northampton or Tewkesbury. The book would have benefited from closer revision in its final stages, particularly in respect of idiosyncratic spellings (the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths' Ledger, Appelby), and both the biography and the index containing a number of errors and omissions. Nevertheless, Professor Lander has written a most useful book, first overall survey of the period, reflect the new approaches and, as an introductory note to this field of modern professional scholarship, Arthur Grimwade tells the ship. As such it deserves, and should command a wide readership, to the initiate to the novice.

consequences), and never losing sight of the significance of the moment, the decision or the man. It finds a path through the jungle of the history of parties. The Declaration of Rights and the Act of Settlement are pulled from the pedestals and placed firmly and convincingly on the foundations of political opportunism. But the much of later Stuart England (like which it is drawn) is confused, a patchwork of other historical books and articles with no clear design imposed on it. Without a clear general picture of the situation in Europe, the flux of English diplomatic foreign policy, and the mounting fears of popery and absolutism, make little sense. Most unfortunately, the lack of local studies leads Coward to a novel and (given the earlier sections) somewhat inexplicable focus on the council politics. Most MPs, we are reminded, remained "inherently distrustful of central government". But they appear as shadowy figures now, off the centre of the stage. As a result one feels, perhaps wrongly, that after 1660 we are sure why how it has come about. Despite the author's emphasis on continuity—the continuity of personal monarchy—the "un-

necessary barrier" of 1660 has been breached.

Even so Dr Coward has provided students with one of the best introductions to the Stuart age, and will instil them with a feeling for the problems of evidence. It is general, and reliable, which research has been a valuable aid to the historical debate of this contentious territory. But he emerges unscathed from his bitter controversies, this is only because he looks at compromise for the resolution of the problem.

But on one matter—this is the book's greatest contribution—there is no compromise. Throughout Coward avoids the temptation of his hindsight, reminding readers that the supposed "millstones" on the road to parliament "any government were, to counterpoise, the outcome—not only, nor always the chosen, nor enduring outcome—of immediate events. If he has not played a completely clear nature of the mind of the Stuart century, Dr Coward has vanquished the principal enemy to our understanding of the Whig interpretation of the history.

"circulation": Hales turned the random observing into a quantitative study of sap flow, sap pressure, and the transpiration of leaves. The study of the "gates" of water input and output led him to Boyle's earlier observations of the generation of "air" from vegetable substances) to a brilliant study of fixed air (Carbon dioxide, but by he introduced a study of gases and devised new and useful apparatus. Hales was a natural, bold and happy experimenter, and his accounts of his work are lively, valued by his own age, not only in England, but in France, Holland, Italy and Germany.

Curiously, there has previously been only one fairly short biography of Hales, published fifty years ago, in this present, fuller work is a high welcome. The two authors, a natural, bold and happy experimenter, and his accounts of his work are lively, valued by his own age, not only in England, but in France, Holland, Italy and Germany.

## Rules of taste

John Buxton

JOHN BARR:  
The Rules of Taste  
Studio Vista/Christies.  
176p.  
£9.95. 0 7087 X

George Wickes set up in business as his own as a goldsmith in 1722, and in 1729 moved to Pantons Street off Haymarket. When he retired in 1760 his business was taken over by John Parker, who had been his apprentice, and Edward Le Sage in 1747. In due course the business passed to the Crown Jewellers and remained in the family until 1911, when it moved to Albemarle Street. In 1952 the business was acquired by the Goldsmiths' and Silversmiths' Company of Regent Street, and the ledger and books in Albemarle Street were put up for auction. Among these were the ledgers of George Wickes, which, from 1735, first overall survey of the period, reflect the new approaches and, as an introductory note to this field of modern professional scholarship, Arthur Grimwade tells the ship. As such it deserves, and should command a wide readership, to the initiate to the novice.

lamentable piles of destruction brought about by wartime bombing and, even more, by local indifference.

Although Wickes was the son of an upholsterer in Bury St Edmunds he was no humble artisan. He was linked by blood and marriage to several county families, and when he retired it was natural for him to go back to Suffolk where, some years before, he had bought an estate at Thurston. There Wickes hoped to settle down to the life of a country gentleman, but he died within the year.

His wife, Alder Phelps, was of the country gentry in Worcester-shire, and herself a considerable heiress. Within a month of their marriage Wickes had registered his first mark and set up in business: the necessary capital seems to have been provided by his wife, and his connection must have helped the business to prosper. She was at least seven years his senior, and they had no children. But they were fortunate, no doubt deservedly, in their association with younger men: with Samuel Netherton, apprenticed in 1750, who became a partner in 1759 and who came to retire at the same time as Wickes (though he was only thirty-seven) and who looked after his widow's affairs till her death; and with John Parker, last of his apprentices, who also was a man of means, and who joined with Edward Wakelin in purchasing Wickes's business when he retired. Wakelin was an outstanding craftsman, but both Netherton and Parker must have learnt something of the techniques of their trade.

George Wickes's capabilities as a goldsmith have been illustrated in a recent exhibition in the Victoria and Albert Museum which, though small, was varied enough to show his distinction. The unadorned "Queen Anne" style of his early work gave place later to the new rococo fashion, but he was never tempted to excessive extravagance, and his characteristic English manner treated the rococo style of ornament as subordinate to design,

instead of overwhelming it. Basic shape and function are always discernible.

Much of his finest silver was made for Frederick Prince of Wales, whose patronage he enjoyed from the time when he moved to Pantons Street till the Prince's unfortunate death in 1751. Some of these pieces, such as the basin and ewer made for the christening of the future George III and the ewer to the design of William Kent, have been much altered, to their disadvantage. But the Pelham gold cup, ordered by the Prince's private secretary, James Pelham, in 1736, still preserves Kent's handsome design, untouched by the asymmetrical swirls of rococo. The cup which Beau Nash took to Bath as a gift from the Prince in the spring of 1739 is much more in the manner of Paul de Lamerie (to whom it has often been attributed) and was said at the time to be "of an entire new taste"; but the evidence of Wickes's ledgers suggests that it was probably made by him.

The change of taste from the Pelham cup, within a couple of years, is certainly surprising, but cannot be used as evidence for the maker. Perhaps the most remarkable survival of Wickes's craftsmanship is to be found in the 170 guineas which the matchless service made for the Earl of Kildare in 1745-47, now known as the Leinster service—Kildare was created Duke of Leinster some twenty years later—which remains almost complete.

Few princes can have had such a choice among goldsmiths of high reputation as Frederick Prince of Wales had in 1735: that his preference for George Wickes among so many Huguenot and English, was neither ill-informed nor fortuitous is proved by this comprehensive study of his work. By the time of his death, Wickes was a gifted goldsmith: it illuminates the society of an age when the Rule of Taste was dominant. The fortunate preservation of the archive of the firm which George Wickes founded provided an opportunity, which has been aptly taken, for an outstanding book.

## Standards of design

By Richard Calvocoressi

STEPHEN BAYLEY:  
In Good Shape: Style in Industrial Design 1900 to 1960  
Serp Design Council. £5.95.  
0 8572 096 6

Well over 100 utilitarian objects, ranging from Edison's phonograph to a plastic folding telephone made just twelve years ago, are reproduced in *In Good Shape*. With the exception of a few Bauhaus objects and chairs which have been allowed to creep in as classic prototypes, nearly every object illustrated is a mass-produced item of the twentieth century. Most of these objects are almost domestic appliances, or twentieth-century equivalents of such things as cars, cameras, televisions and hi-fi sets. They are examples of what Stephen Bayley, in his attempt to establish a basis for design without subscribing to the absolute principles of modernism, calls "pure form".

In *Good Shape* is intended to equip the reader with some of the essential arguments about industrial design by reprinting, and in certain instances translating, extracts from the writings of a few Bauhaus designers and theorists. Hales was a natural, bold and happy experimenter, and his accounts of his work are lively, valued by his own age, not only in England, but in France, Holland, Italy and Germany.

Curiously, there has previously been only one fairly short biography of Hales, published fifty years ago, in this present, fuller work is a high welcome. The two authors, a natural, bold and happy experimenter, and his accounts of his work are lively, valued by his own age, not only in England, but in France, Holland, Italy and Germany.

ethic—Continental rationalism tempered by a more homely arts and crafts good sense—is represented by Gordon Russell, part of whose article "What is Good Design?" (1949) is reprinted here. The Pop artist's ironic rejection of British notions of good, honest design in favour of the more transient values of the "new" design, which with its colourful and persuasive advertising, finds expression in an eloquent piece by Richard Hamilton.

But it is for the United States, where greater attention is paid to design psychology, often involving highly sophisticated market research programmes, that Mr Bayley (following Hamilton) reserves his keenest admiration; specifically, for a handful of American commercial designers unknown to most of us, who in his view did nothing less than create "the imagery of the twentieth century" in their product designs for the giant industrial firms. Their preoccupations—with streamlining, styling (or symbolism) and calculated obsolescence—were quite distinct from those of the more academic and puritanical European writers on design, although as early as 1930 Philip Morton Shand welcomed the very "American" idea "which animates the American, that what he buys need not be of too permanent or durable a nature, because very soon something better will be perfected with which it will be to his advantage to supersede it".

About a third of the objects illustrated by Mr Bayley were conceived by Americans, including cars whose styling was inspired by the technical necessities of aircraft design. The more fantastic or baroque American creations contrast sharply with the Germanic austerity and cleanliness familiar to owners of those functional-looking record players, kitchen mixers and clock radios designed in the 1950s by staff of the Hochschule für Gestaltung at Ulm (a sort of post-war Bauhaus) and manufactured by Braun. Regrettably, Bayley reproduces nothing in colour in his book, although he concedes the primacy of the colourist in the "client design preference" in, for example, the market for IBM computers.

Design history is still very much perched in its infancy, though a few universities and polytechnics have recently introduced it as a subject. The three-year-old Design History Society, whose Executive Committee includes Bayley, appears to be flourishing. One of the patrons of that society is Reynier Banham, whom Bayley quotes or refers to with approval three times on two consecutive pages of his introductory essay—most notably, and uncritically, as the "chief rhapsodist of both the Modern Movement and the street-level popular culture which displaced it". It is presumably as a successor to Professor Banham, now rhapsodizing in the United States, that Bayley sees himself, and there is a certain similarity between the format of *In Good Shape* and Banham's *Age of Mass Design*, subtitled "A Personal View of Modern Architecture". The personal aspect of Mr Bayley's book—his selection of objects—is the one that may wear least well. More useful will be the texts, biographies of individual designers and the bibliography, though it is curious to find here no mention of recent published research by Peter Lloyd Jones into various social and psychological aspects of consumer culture, or even to Bayley's concern but barely considered by him.

One final objection: in his preface, Bayley declares industrial design to be "the art of the twentieth century" and says that "We need a new word to describe what the commercial and national galleries support." It is a plea, however, which is unnecessary to justify his undisciplined interest in almost anything that has style or wit" (from the blurb) by getting involved in the complex argument about the current state of art. There are those who will dissent from his extreme practice heavily governed by commercial and materialistic considerations; while this is not to belittle the important place occupied by industrial design in our daily lives. *In Good Shape* is a book which, out of its author's enthusiasm for his subject—not, as he would like us to believe, out of "a sense of outrage" at what he saw in the galleries around him.

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